

REPORT (PART II)

ON

NATIVE-OWNED ENGLISH NEWSPAPERS IN BENGAL

FOR THE

Week ending Saturday, 28th February 1903.

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I.—FOREIGN POLITICS.

237. The *Indian Mirror* dwells on the disturbed state of the Musalman world, due either to internal dissensions or Foreign complications. Russia is pressing nearer and nearer to Afghanistan, and presumably, as a consequence, the Amir is consolidating his army; but it is difficult to see how long he can withstand Russia's advances. The *Mirror* hopes that matters will mend with the Amir's proposed visit to the Viceroy.

INDIAN MIRROR,
26th Feb. 1903.

Morocco and Somaliland are in a state of ferment, and England and Russia are playing at cross purposes in Persia. Both vow and protest that they love Persia and are working for her good, but the truth of the matter is that each wants to be lord and possessor.

Lastly, Christian Europe is trying to oust Turkey from Europe, but the "unspeakable Turk" dies hard, and has so far foiled all attempts.

II.—HOME ADMINISTRATION.

(a)—Police.

238. The *Bengalee* writes:—

Dacoity in the Burdwan division.

"We hope the attention of Government has been attracted to the recrudescence of dacoity in the Burdwan Division. We are being daily inundated with letters on the subject, which would seem to show that a regular panic prevails in the localities which have been the scene of recent dacoities. And if the villagers have been over-awed by the boldness of the dacoits, their helplessness has been all the more forcibly brought home to them by the inefficiency or the impotence of the police. Are there no more Wauchopes and Baka Ullas in the Bengal Police?"

BENGALIAN,
22nd Feb. 1903.

239. The *Bengalee* brings to light another case of police oppression in which Pandit Bindeshri Prosad, a respectable native gentleman of Gorakhpur, was severely assaulted by the local police for threatening to report a constable who had beaten one of his grandsons for going beyond the limits prescribed for the public at the Coronation Darbar held at Gorakhpur.

BENGALIAN,
22nd Feb. 1903.

Police oppression.

Although the district authorities advise no further steps being taken on the part of the Babu, the *Bengalee* urges Government to hold an independent enquiry.

240. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* had not the least doubt that this gentleman who was charged by the Burdwan Police with assaulting a European and his wife because he could not realise a paltry sum from the *sahab*, would be discharged. Whoever heard of a Bengali gentleman of education and good social position assaulting a European and his wife?

AMRITA BAZAR
PATRIKA,
26th Feb. 1903.

But who is responsible for this? It is true the District Superintendent of Police acted under the orders of the District Magistrate, but was not the latter advised by his subordinate?

This case affords another reason why the Police and the Magistracy should be separated.

241. The *Bengalee* anxiously awaits the punishment the Lieutenant-Governor will inflict upon the Burdwan Police Officers for subjecting Dr. Mittra to the gross indignities they did on a trumped-up charge which has been dismissed.

BENGALIAN,
26th Feb. 1903.

Ibid.

If a European had been treated so, the Anglo-Indian Press would have demanded the heads of the police officers on a charger.

242. Referring to the Hon'ble Maulvi Seraj-ul-Islam's question in the Bengal Council whether the Government were aware of the oppression caused by the *chaukidari*-tax,

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The *chaukidari*-tax.

and the Chief Secretary's reply to the effect that the tax was generally approved, the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* writes that every one who is not too poor to pay two pice a month is assessed, and further that the Panchayet have been empowered not only to assess the villagers at their sweet will, but also to realise

the tax from defaulters by distress-warrants. But alas, these defaulters constitute the poorest of the poor, and is it from them that arrears are wrung? How then can a high-minded and experienced officer like Mr. Hare, the Chief Secretary, say that the tax is generally approved?

In the opinion of the *Patrika*, the Police Commission will be wanting in their duty if they do not recommend the abolition of so cruel a tax.

(b)—Working of the Courts.

BEHAR HERALD,
21st Feb. 1903.

243. The *Behar Herald* writes that the people are fast losing confidence in the High Court as the highest tribunal of the land, and assigns the following reasons for this.

The High Court.

Firstly, like the other departments of the State, it has become imperialistic and aggressive; secondly, the superiority of the bar over the bench; and, lastly, the power of the executive over the judicial. The preponderance of the power of the executive has recently been exemplified in the Pennell case, and even High Court Judges enjoy but a nominal independence, because they do not hold their posts as life tenures.

The *Herald* accordingly suggests that High Court Judges should, as they do in England, hold their posts for life, and be men who possess independent characters and proved ability. Under these conditions only can the best traditions of the High Court be kept up.

INDIAN NATION,
23rd Feb. 1903.

244. The *Indian Nation* objects to the reservation of an office for any particular race as has been done in the case of one of the Police Magistracies in Calcutta, which, since the days of Mr. Amir Ali, has always been given to a Muhammadan Barrister, when Government have not appointed a member of the Provincial Service.

Fearing that the policy of Government will repeat itself in the case of Mr. Justice Amir Ali, who shortly proceeds on long leave, the *Nation* reminds the Government that the Judge whom Mr. Justice Amir Ali succeeded was a Hindu, and further that Mr. Justice Amir Ali was chosen not as the representative of the Muhammadan community, but of the legal profession.

On these grounds it asks Government to give the officiating appointment to Babu Sarada Charan Mitra.

INDIAN EMPIRE,
24th Feb. 1903.

245. The acquittal of an Assam tea-planter, who was charged by a police constable with having assaulted and wrongfully confined him, shows the *Indian Empire* how in all

Trial of Europeans in Assam.

criminal trials throughout India, pre-eminently in Assam, Europeans have an advantage over the natives of the soil. Not only are the criminal codes and courts extremely partial, but the juries, constituted as they are, mainly of the countrymen of the accused, are more so. The unsworn and unsupported statements of a European, as was the case in the above trial, are taken as gospel truths, while the sworn testimony of native witnesses goes for naught.

So it is not only the helpless cooly now, but also the irresistible police that has no chance against a European tea-planter.

AMRITA BAZAR
PATRIKA,
25th Feb. 1903

246. In connection with this case the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* asks the Lieutenant-Governor to call upon Mr. Fischer, the District Magistrate, to explain his unjustifiable

The Puri Raja's case.

conduct throughout the proceedings, and more particularly on whose authority he engaged the services of the Government pleaders to defend the police, and by whom their fees are to be paid; why he transferred the case to his own file, and why he brought a false charge against Babu Brojendra Kumar Seal.

It is a typical case, concludes the *Patrika*, showing how absolutely necessary it is to separate the Police from the Magistracy.

(d)—Education.

HINDOO PATRIOT,
23rd Feb. 1903.

247. Owing to Lord Curzon's silence at the Convocation last Saturday, the prevalent feeling among the large gathering, writes the *Hindoo Patriot*, was one of being left

The Convocation.

severely alone. But as the people are now quite accustomed to being taken by surprise, the *Patriot* does not lay much emphasis on this. What it does resent is the Vice-Chancellor's irrelevant and sarcastic address, which, instead of

dilating on the internal affairs of the University, defended the recommendations of the Commission in the most extravagant terms, against the criticism of the Native Press.

Considering the Vice-Chancellor's unfavourable attitude, his out-of-place, immoderate speech, this journal asks him to exercise a little self-denial and keep away from the forthcoming meeting of the Senate.

248. The decidedly representative opposition which has been evoked by the recommendation of the Universities Commission seems inexplicable to the mind of the Vice-Chancellor, but the *Bengalee* makes it quite clear by explaining that these recommendations would be treated as "possible parts of impending legislation" for in the words of Mr. Raleigh, "the Governor-General in Council should be empowered to frame new regulations for each University in consultation with the Local Government and with the Senate."

The Convocation.

The *Bengalee* further comments on two more points raised by the Vice-Chancellor, viz., (a) University Education and the aid of private benefactors, and (b) the study of law. Regarding the first it asks whether the Government have made any serious endeavours to turn the stream of Indian munificence into this channel, not to say that they cannot, for funds have flowed towards the Delhi Darbar and the Victoria Memorial Hall. Again, whilst agreeing that the law classes are not what they should be, the journal distrusts the ambiguous way in which the Vice-Chancellor has recommended the establishment of one Central Law College and the suppression of existing law classes, and supports Mr. Justice Bannerjee in his protest against this recommendation.

249. The *Bengalee* finds no occult virtue in centralisation, and does not think that the inferior talent among the legal faculty is in any way due to the existing Law classes. It does not, therefore, agree with Mr. Raleigh's proposal for the establishment of a Central Law College. The deterioration of the Bar has kept pace with the deterioration of the Bench, because the modern Bench does not appreciate learning. Young and inexperienced lawyers now-a-days take the place of men like Sir Barnes Peacock and Sir John Phear!

But what strikes the *Bengalee* most is the tone of the Vice-Chancellor's address. Advice as to the working of the University was conspicuous by its absence. He spoke as the President of the Universities Commission and not as the Vice-Chancellor of the University. Well may the University exclaim "Save me from my friend!"

250. A growing desire to learn the arts and manufactures, writes the *Indian Mirror*, has taken Indians to America, Germany and Japan for their education; but in the last two countries named the language difficulty presents itself, and students have first to acquire a knowledge of the language before they can prosecute their respective studies.

The *Mirror* accordingly suggests that schools should be opened in different parts of India, especially in Presidency towns, where Japanese, Chinese and only the most important European languages should be taught. It lays special stress on the instruction of Japanese and Chinese, so that a better means of understanding may be brought about among the different Asiatic races, which would be one way of strengthening the bond of brotherhood between them.

(h)—General.

251. In connection with Mr. Badshah's transfer to the Excise Department of the United Provinces, the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* knows that he will shine in any Department he is placed in; but why, it asks, should the services of so devoted and experienced an officer be lost to the Postal Department and to the community? Such stupid arrangements prevail no where else except in unfortunate India!

Mr. Badshah's transfer to the Excise Department.

252. On account of his undoubted ability, the *Indian Mirror* should like to see Mr. Badshah at the top of the official ladder, but it hardly thinks that his appointment to the Excise Commissionership of the United Provinces will lead to the realisation of this hope.

Ibid.

BENGALUR,
25th Feb. 1903.

BENGALUR,
26th Feb. 1903.

INDIAN MIRROR,
26th Feb. 1903.

AMRITA BAZAR
PATRIKA,
20th Feb. 1903.

INDIAN MIRROR,
21st Feb. 1903.

Mr. Badshah has spent the best years of his service in the Postal Department, and is it he who seeks the transfer?

INDIAN MIRROR,
21st Feb. 1903.

253. Whilst drawing Lord Curzon's attention to the behaviour of the men of the West Riding Regiment during the Coronation festivities, the *Indian Mirror* publishes

Captain Winter's conduct.

the facts of the case, in which Captain Winter, Commandant, No. 1, Field Battery, Hyderabad Contingent, was charged with having wantonly insulted the wife of Mr. Padshah, Barrister-at-Law, and with using abusive language towards Mr. Moos, a Parsi gentleman. The accused was acquitted on the first charge, but was found guilty of the second and fined Rs. 50.

The *Mirror* appeals directly to the Commander-in-Chief, and asks whether such an officer should continue to enjoy his commission?

INDIAN NATION,
23rd Feb. 1903.

254. Lord Curzon's prejudices, writes the *Indian Nation*, are abundantly clear in the constitution of the various Commissions His Excellency has instituted. He would have us

Lord Curzon's prejudices.

believe that none but officials are competent enough to undertake the management of public business! Look at the Universities Commission, continues the *Nation*, composed of Vice-Chancellors and Directors of Public Instruction. What do they know of the details of examination, teaching, and college life? Then, again, one would think that the native community deserved to be represented largely on the Police Commission, but we see only the Maharaja of Darbhanga, who is too high above the men most affected by the conduct of the Police to know what and how they suffer, and, lastly, whereas the eminent members of the legal profession should have considered the Civil Procedure Bill, Lord Curzon did not think fit to appoint them. It is the highest culture and energy of Lord Curzon that makes these disappointments all the keener.

BENGALIAN,
24th Feb. 1903.

255. The *Bengalee* gratefully records the generosity of His Excellency

Lord Curzon's keen sense of justice.

Lord Curzon, in relieving the distress of Maulvi Baharuddin Ahmad, a Sheristadar who was dismissed from the Bogra Collectorate so far back as December 1898, by a private donation; and praises His Excellency's sense of justice for not merely reinstating him, but recommending to the Local Government his appointment as a Deputy Collector of the last grade.

AMRITA BAZAR
PATRIKA,
24th Feb. 1903.

256. While on account of their approved service and seniority the

The High Court and the Statutory Service.

Amrita Bazar Patrika hopes for the appointment of Messrs. Geidt, Staley and Pargiter, the Hon'ble Mr. B. L. Gupta, and Babu Sarada Charan Mitter as Judges of the High Court during the course of the year, when seven Judgeships are likely to fall vacant, it draws the Viceroy's attention to the claims of the Statutory Civilians, which in spite of the Indian High Court's Act have been ignored for nearly half a century.

It is a pity, concludes the *Patrika*, that men who have the highest reputation as Judges and in whom the public have the greatest confidence, do not come to the notice of Government. If the wrong can be remedied, no one is better able to do it than Lord Curzon.

AMRITA BAZAR
PATRIKA,
25th Feb. 1903.

257. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* appeals to Lord Curzon to remove the

Public Works Accounts Department.

injustice under which the Bengali Accountants of the Public Works Department are labouring in the matter of Presidency and House Allowance. The Public Works Code lays down that Natives of Bengal, or persons born in or near Calcutta and permanent residents of Calcutta, are sufficiently compensated by the grant of Presidency house-rent only. The natives of Bombay, or persons born in and near Bombay and permanent residents of the town, suffer no such injustice, and if such a ruling does exist, why should the European and Eurasian residents of Calcutta receive a Presidency Allowance? Why should this exception be made in the case of Bengalis alone?

Will His Excellency, concludes the *Patrika*, look into the matter, and remove a wrong for which apparently there is no excuse?

BENGALIAN,
25th Feb. 1903.

258. On the subject of taxation, the *Bengalee* writes that the Government

The levy of taxes.

of India levies taxes irrespective of the ability of the people to pay, and regardless of the fact that India is not a wealthy European country. The burden of a model administration cannot therefore be imposed upon it.

A reference to the schedule of stamp duties, concludes the *Bengalee*, shows that it is a modification of the English schedule, but modified unfortunately not in view of the relative poverty of the people of this country, but through the necessity of securing a large revenue required for a costly administration.

The disparity between the English and Indian Schedules shows that India is not the most lightly taxed country in the world.

259. As there is a possibility of the Collectorship of Calcutta being given away outside the Provincial Civil Service, the *Bengalee* refers to the Hon'ble Mr. Buckland's statement in the Bengal Council that it was not necessary to have a Rs. 1,000 grade for Deputy Magistrates, as they could obtain appointments carrying a salary of over Rs. 1,000. The Collectorship of Calcutta is among the few appointments that are tacitly understood to be the prize appointments of the Executive Service, and if this understanding is not given effect to when the time comes, it will be the second appointment that the members of that Service will have been deprived of. If this is really going to be the case, the prospect for them must indeed be gloomy.

BENGALIAN,
25th Feb. 1903.

III.—LEGISLATION.

260. The confidence placed by Lord Curzon in the Select Committee sitting to amend the Civil Procedure Code has greatly pleased the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*. Realising that absolute trust has been placed in them, the Indian members have worked with the single purpose of making the Code as faultless as possible, and the Bill is fast coming to a conclusion. The policy hitherto followed was a suicidal one and provided Europeans from abroad with "fat berths."

The great blessing that the revised Code will prove to the people of India, shows the Government that they can do their work better by associating the natives of the soil in the task of ruling the Empire.

AMRITA BAZAR
PATRIKA,
26th Feb. 1903.

IV.—NATIVE STATES.

261. The *Bengalee* attributes the gross irregularities that mark the progress of the trial of Tattya Saheb Holkar for murder, such as the committal of the case to the Sessions on the conflicting evidence of accused persons, the detention of the prince in custody when it was allowable for him to have been released on bail, the omission of the public prosecution to submit a report to the Darbar on the points on which a failure of justice may have arisen and resulted in the acquittal of the accused by the Sessions Judge, etc., to a weak administration and the highly defective constitution of the Indore Council.

BENGALIAN,
24th Feb. 1903.

VI.—MISCELLANEOUS.

262. In connection with Lord Curzon's statement at the Chamber of Commerce dinner, that the hoarded wealth of India amounts to over 825 crores of rupees, the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* writes:—

"The Indians have no hoarded wealth. They had some when the British came and destroyed the existing order of things, which led to insecurity of property. At that troublesome period people had to bury their rupees and mohurs under ground. But now we can assure the Viceroy that India has no hoarded wealth; for if there were any we would at least have some knowledge of it.

Of course, if the Indians had hoarded wealth they ought to have utilized it for the development of the resources of their country. But since they have it not, it is suicidal and foolish to oppose the influx of foreign capital into the country. We know that there is some opposition in certain quarters to this influx of foreign capital, but it is based more on sentimental than practical grounds."

263. The same paper relates how the baseless statements of two journalists that the people of the Eastern Bengal districts had stocks of grain buried underground

AMRITA BAZAR
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23rd Feb. 1903.

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PATRIKA,
25th Feb. 1903.

nearly led the Government of Sir R. Temple to withdraw its relieving hand from the famine-stricken survivors of the thousands of victims of the disastrous storm wave of 1877.

It is very dangerous, continues the *Patrika*, for rulers to give credence to such statements. Similarly, Lord Curzon should not accept the estimate that the hoarded wealth of India is about 825 crores, for the simple reason that if it was, India would not be what she is.

If capital is wanted for the development of the country, it must either come from the Government or from England and America.

264. The *Indian Nation* writes as follows:—

European Clubs on the *maidan*
on Sundays.

"European Clubs, we are informed, are permitted to have their games on the *maidan* on Sundays, but Native Clubs are not. If this is so, we

cannot understand the philosophy of the distinction. Games on a Sunday are not to the Hindu a rebellion against religion; to the Christian they are. It is not fair, therefore, to enforce on the heathen the observance of the Sabbath, and to permit its violation by the Christian. The fairest course would be to give freedom to both, each being left responsible for the exercise of his conscience. If games on a Sunday shock the authorities, how is the shock avoided when Christians are the players?"

INDIAN MIRROR,
23rd Feb. 1903.

HINDOO PATRIOT,
23rd Feb. 1903.

Proposed site for the Victoria
Memorial Hall.

265. The *Hindoo Patriot* urges that it is extremely undesirable to build the Memorial Hall south of the Lawrence Statue, both from the hygienic as well as from the military points of view, and suggests that the Committee should acquire some large *bustee* in the heart of the town, where they can place their "marble joy for ever."

INDIAN MIRROR,
24th Feb. 1903.

266. The *Indian Mirror* looks upon the *maidan* not only as the lung of an over-crowded city, but also as the one redeeming feature of smoky Calcutta, and thinks that if

Ibid.

any encroachment were made on it, it would seriously affect the health of the inhabitants in the hot months of April and May.

But why should the Government care when they are happy on the breezy heights of the Himalayas!

INDIAN MIRROR,
26th Feb. 1903.

267. The *Indian Mirror* expresses its sorrow at their Royal Highnesses leaving these shores and professes its joy in the following terms, at the idea of the Duke of Cannaught becoming Viceroy of India:—

"The appointment of a member of the Royal Family as Viceroy will be quite in consonance with Indian traditions and the feelings and sentiments of the people. It would give great satisfaction to the Princes and people of India, knowing as they do the past services of the Duke."

INDIAN MIRROR,
26th Feb. 1903.

268. Regarding Mr. James Sevestre's address to the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce to the effect that India was the stronghold of foreign competition and that there are even British firms who wish to suppress

An opportunity for Indian
Merchants.

Native competition by stimulating the importation of foreign goods, the *Indian Mirror* writes:—

"As to the opportunities of 'Native' merchants, they are largely foreshadowed in the speech of Raja Peary Mohun Mukerji. If followed in its wise suggestions, it ought to give our National Chamber of Commerce a high place at one bound. Our fear is that there is less cohesion in Bengal among Indian merchants and traders than is to be found in Bombay. If we had enough cohesion and purpose, we could do even without the proffered aid of Mr. Sevestre and his London Bureau of Commercial Intelligence."

OFFICE OF THE INSPR.-GENERAL
OF POLICE, L. P.,
WRITERS' BUILDINGS,
The 28th February 1903.

H. B. ST. LEGER,
Asst. to the Insp.-General of Police, L. P.